



ATTACHMENT A Remarks

The interview held with Examiner Krishnamurthy on September 15, 2005, is gratefully acknowledged. The courtesy and cooperative spirit shown by the Examiner during the interview is much appreciated. As set forth in the Interview Summary prepared by the Examiner, an amendment to claim 1 was proposed wherein the collapsible aperture is defined as comprising a slit extending across the full width of the base of the diaphragm. Claim 1 has now been formally amended along these lines and the other rejected independent claims, claims 4 and 16, have been similarly amended although the language now used in claims 1, 4 and 16 has been refined to some extent and claims 1 and 4 have also been amended to address a specific issue raised by the Examiner during the interview. The substance of the discussions at the interview is incorporated in the remarks which follows.

Claims 1-4, 7-9, 11, 14 and 15 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Souza in view of D^E 40 33 818 A1 (the "German patent") and further in view of Vest. Claim 10 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) on the same references "and further in view of Scheffer" while claims 5 and 6 have been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) on the same references "and further in view of Taylor." Finally, claim 16 has been rejected under 35 USC 103(a) over the Souza and Vest references. These rejections are respectfully traversed although, as indicated above, the claims have been amended to even more clearly define over these references.

As discussed previously, the independent claims have been amended to set forth a feature that is clearly not disclosed in any of the references. In this regard, claim 1 recites that the collapsible aperture claimed comprises "a slit which extends across the full width of the diaphragm and which passes through a region located at or adjacent an apex of the diaphragm." Claim 4 has also been similarly amended. Claim 16 similarly recites that the collapsible aperture is "defined by a slit which extends across the full width of the diaphragm and intersects an apex of the diaphragm."

It is respectfully submitted that the feature added to the independent claims patentably defines over the cited references. ~~For the record, the feature is based on, and supported by,~~ ^{newly claimed} the embodiment of, e.g., Figures 7C and 7D which show a transverse ridge 96 for forming a corresponding slit, identified as 22 in, e.g., Figure 2, which extends across the full width of the diaphragm and which passes through a region located at or adjacent the diaphragm apex, as claimed. It will be appreciated that while Figures 7C and 7D fully support the ^{new feature} ~~language~~ now

added to

used in claim 1, 4 and 16, the invention is not limited to the specific embodiment shown in these figures.

Turning to the cited references, in the Souza, German and Vest patents, the corresponding aperture is confined to the distal end of the diaphragm, and clearly does not extend across the full width of the diaphragm as claimed in the claims now presented. Accordingly, it is respectfully submitted that claims 1, 4 and 16, and the claims dependent thereon, are allowable along with previously allowed claims 12 and 13.

It is noted that claims 1 and 4 have also been amended to recite that the diaphragm, excluding the slit, is rotationally symmetrical about a longitudinal axis which passes through its apex so as to address a point raised by the Examiner during the interview. In particular, the Examiner suggested during the interview that with the slit extending across the width of the diaphragm, the diaphragm might not be considered to be rotationally symmetrical as claimed.

Finally, it is noted that although claims 1, 4 and 16 have been amended to very clearly define over the references and thus expedite the prosecution of the instant application, applicant reserves the right to present claims similar in scope to that of the unamended claims in a continuing application.

Applicant has made an earnest effort to place this application in condition for allowance by limiting the claims to a feature that is clearly not taught in the references and to thus place the application in condition for allowance. If the Examiner believes that there are remaining problems standing in the way of the immediate allowance of this application remain, the Examiner is respectfully urged to telephone the undersigned so that any such problems may be resolved.

END REMARKS